AMENDMENTS

Please cancel claims 1-21, and 27-29 without prejudice. Also, please amend claims 22, 26, 30, 31 and 32, and add claims 33-38, all as indicated below in the following detailed listing of claims.

Claims 1-21 (canceled).

Claim 22 (currently amended). ~~A media dispensing~~An apparatus, comprising:

~~a media support device adapted to support a stack of media sheets thereon;~~

~~a picking device adapted to dispense individual media sheets from the stack in succession;~~

a counting device adapted to ~~detect~~ count ~~data indicative of~~ how many media sheets are dispensed from ~~the~~a stack of media sheets~~during a given time period~~;

a measuring device adapted to ~~detect measurement data indicative of~~measure a quantitative characteristic of the stack;

a processor in data-communicative linkage with both the counting device and the measuring device;

a computer readable memory device; and

a set of computer executable instructions operatively resident within the memory device and executable by the processor, the set of computer executable instructions adapted to cause the processor to compute:

a plurality of ratios, wherein each ratio is a ratio of a respective change in the quantitative characteristic to a respective corresponding number of media sheets dispensed from the stack; and,

an estimated number of media sheets remaining in the stack based on the ratios~~count data and the measurement data~~.

Claim 23 (original). The apparatus of claim 22, and wherein the counting device is a top-of-form sensor.

Claim 24 (original). The apparatus of claim 22, and wherein the measuring device is adapted to substantially detect a weight of the stack.

Claim 25 (original). The apparatus of claim 22, and wherein the measuring device is adapted to substantially detect a thickness of the stack.

Claim 26 (currently amended). The apparatus of claim 22, and wherein:

the stack has a top and an opposite bottom;

~~the picking device comprises a pick roller adapted to dispense individual media sheets from the stack top, wherein such dispensing of media sheets depletes the stack;~~

~~the media support device comprises a lift mechanism adapted to lift the stack bottom toward the pick roller as the stack is depleted;~~ and,

the measuring device is adapted to substantially detect a position of the stack bottom relative to the toppick roller.

Claim 27-29 (canceled).

Claim 30 (currently amended). The apparatus of claim 29, and wherein the set of computer executable instructions is further adapted to cause the processor to calculate a mean value for the plurality of ratios, wherein the estimated number of media sheets remaining in the stack is based on the mean value.

Claim 31 (currently amended). The apparatus of claim 29, and wherein the set of computer executable instructions is further adapted to cause the processor to calculate a median value for the plurality of ratios, wherein the estimated number of media sheets remaining in the stack is based on the median value.

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Claim 32 (currently amended). ~~A media dispensing~~An apparatus, comprising:

~~a means for supporting a stack of media sheets;~~

a means for dispensing individual media sheets from ~~the~~a stack of media sheets in succession;

a means for ~~generating count data indicative of~~counting how many media sheets are dispensed from the stack ~~during a given time period~~;

a means for ~~generating measurement data indicative of~~measuring a quantitative characteristic of the stack; and,

a means for computing:

a plurality of ratios, wherein each ratio is a ratio of a respective change in the quantitative characteristic to a respective corresponding number of media sheets dispensed from the stack; and,

an estimated number of media sheets remaining in the stack based on the ratios~~both the count data and the measurement data~~.

Claim 33 (new). An apparatus for estimating the number of media sheets remaining in a stack, comprising:

a computer readable memory device; and,

a set of computer executable instructions operatively resident on the memory device, the instructions adapted to compute:

a plurality of ratios, wherein each ratio is a ratio of a respective change in a quantitative characteristic of the stack to a respective corresponding number of media sheets dispensed from the stack;

a value selected from the group consisting of a mean value for the plurality of ratios and a median value for the plurality of ratios; and,

an estimated number of media sheets remaining in the stack based on the value.

34 (new). The apparatus of claim 33, wherein:

the set of computer executable instructions is further adapted to detect that a new stack has been formed; and,

each of the plurality of ratios is computed in response to detecting that the new a new stack has been formed.

35 (new). The apparatus of claim 34, further comprising a counting device configured to count media sheets dispensed from the stack.

36 (new). The apparatus of claim 34, further comprising a measuring device adapted to substantially weigh the stack.

37 (new). The apparatus of claim 34, further comprising a measuring device adapted to substantially measure a thickness of the stack.

38 (new). The apparatus of claim 34, further comprising a picking device adapted to dispense individual media sheets from the stack.

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